DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 355 227 SP 034 388

AUTHOR Person, William A.; And Others
TITLE Evaluation of a Program Focusing on Teaching Strategies for Culturally Diverse Students.
PUB DATE Nov 92
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association (21st, Knoxville, TN, November 10-13, 1992).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cross Cultural Training; *Cultural Pluralism; *Educational Practices; *Educational Strategies; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Inservice Teacher Education; *Institutes (Training Programs); Multicultural Education; Program Evaluation; Summer Programs; Surveys; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Behavior; *Teacher Effectiveness
IDENTIFIERS *Diversity (Student); *Implementation Analysis; Mississippi; Mississippi State University

ABSTRACT

A critical challenge facing educators today is meeting the needs of culturally diverse school populations. Since 1989, Mississippi State University has provided a summer institute, Strategies for Instructing Culturally Diverse Students, in which selected Mississippi elementary and secondary teachers have identified strategies for addressing the educational needs of culturally diverse students. The study described in this paper was conducted to determine the extent to which institute participants have implemented strategies for working with culturally diverse students in classrooms and school districts. A sample of institute "graduates" (N=57) completed a questionnaire which provided demographic information, primary responsibilities, years of experience in education, gender, level of education, and race. The "graduates" also indicated the extent to which they had implemented strategies identified and studied in the institute. Preliminary results suggest that respondents have either implemented strategies, or have engaged in behaviors that are appropriate for positive learning opportunities to occur. The 25-item survey instrument, presenting average responses and standard deviations, is appended. (Contains 11 references.) (LL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED355227

EVALUATION OF A PROGRAM FOCUSING ON TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR CULTURALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

William A. Person,
Neil G. Amos, and Robert L. Jenkins

Mississippi State University

Paper presented at the Twenty-First Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Knoxville, Tennessee, November 10-13, 1992.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

N. Amos

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SO034388

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EVALUATION OF A PROGRAM FOCUSING ON TEACHING
STRATEGIES FOR CULTURALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

One of the most critical challenges facing professional educators today is how to meet the needs of all students in our schools. Indeed, educational literature is replete with information on addressing more effective ways to serve the culturally diverse student populations in our schools. Major educational reform documents and educational policy and philosophical position statements, such as those developed by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), have clearly addressed the need to improve educational opportunities for the culturally diverse pupils in our schools today. The extent to which this need can be addressed is clearly dependent upon the extent to which educators are willing, individually and collectively, to learn about the background, experiences, and needs of their pupils and, as a consequence, make appropriate use of this knowledge in their interactions with them.

Since 1989, Mississippi State University has provided an intensive summer institute for selected elementary and secondary educators in the State of Mississippi. In each institute, participants have identified strategies for addressing the educational needs of culturally diverse students centered around broad problem areas such as fair and equal treatment of pupils, knowledge of pupil background, and parent involvement in school activities. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which institute "graduates" have implemented strategies for working with culturally diverse students

identified in a series of intensive summer institutes during 1989, 1990, and 1991, in their respective school or school district.

Historical Background

During the summer and fall of 1988, oral history interviews were conducted with twenty-two (22) selected African-American educators who were either teachers, counselors, or administrators in the State of Mississippi during the civil rights movement period of 1960-1970. These interviews were conducted in conjunction with a special teaching project funded by the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Mississippi State University entitled "Recollections of Black Educators During the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi: An Oral History" (Jenkins & Person, 1989).

In response to the question of whether or not the civil rights movement had resulted in improved educational opportunities for African-American students in the State of Mississippi, the majority of the participants indicated a qualified "yes." Specifically, the participants responded that those students who were part of that era have been quite successful in their careers. However, significant reservation was expressed about the current ability of elementary and secondary educational programs to adequately address the needs of African-American students. Problems identified by the project participants included the (1) lack of proper role models, (2) teacher apathy, (3) apparent lack of knowledge about the background and needs of students, and (4) apparent inability of many educators today to address these educational needs.

In January, 1989, an opportunity to discuss the oral history project with Mississippi State Department of Education (SDE) officials in the Office of the Race Equity Coordinator (OREC) was provided. Similar observations of the above problems had also been noted by the Office of the Race Equity Coordinator in school districts served by that office. Several additional meetings resulted in the decision to conduct

a pilot institute in June, 1989, at Mississippi State University through the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

The purpose of the "Strategies for Instructing Culturally Diverse Students" (SICDS) Institute was to enhance the awareness level of educators (teachers, administrators, and counselors) of the need to work more effectively with students from culturally diverse backgrounds. Specifically, the institute has focused upon that body of knowledge that has been found to be effective in the education of culturally diverse students. Scholars and practitioners are used to help achieve the objectives of the institute. To date, four successful institutes have been conducted at Mississippi State University during the summers of 1989, 1990, 1991, and 1992, for a total of seventy-three (73) Mississippi educators. Plans for a fifth institute are presently underway.

The SICDS Institute is planned, developed, and implemented based upon the following assumptions:

1. Each child within each aspect of possible classification (gender, race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, exceptionality, sibling relationship, religious affiliation, etc.) brings an element of cultural diversity to the school environment that is unique and must be respected as such in the provision of an equal educational opportunity.
2. Mutual respect and acceptance of each individual in the educational organization are necessary preconditions for maximum benefits to be derived.
3. Educators need to know that their role is vitally important to the improvement of the quality of life.
4. Educators need to be empowered to assume full responsibility for their role in the total development of their pupils.
5. Educators need to make continuous and honest self-assessments for both personal and professional development to take place.

6. Personal and professional development among educators enhance their willingness to be concerned about both the academic and personal development of their pupils.

By using the above assumptions to guide our thinking, the directors of the SICDS Institute believe that we have made a positive difference and will continue to do so in the personal, professional, and academic development of educators and their pupils. This belief has been reinforced by the many positive comments made by the institute participants in their evaluation. Additionally, SICDS Institute participants have used materials to conduct related staff development programs in their individual school districts during the school year.

Survey Procedure

Development of Survey

One of the final responsibilities of SICDS Institute participants is to develop plans of action in small group arrangements, usually four to six members per group. The charge for each group is to identify strategies that are appropriate for effectively addressing the educational needs of culturally diverse students centered around broad problem areas. These plans of action were used by the SICDS directors to generate several positive statements related to broad problem areas of the school's environment. The statements were then further refined to eliminate duplication and improve their clarity. The final draft of the SICDS Institute Survey consisted of 25 survey items and five preliminary questions which provide demographic information about the respondents such as primary responsibility, years of experience in education, gender, level of education, and race.

Sample

The sample for this study consisted of the 57 "graduates" of the SICDS Institutes in 1989, 1990, and 1991. Seventeen, or 30%, of the returned surveys were determined to be usable for inclusion in this preliminary study.

Survey Instrument

Each SICDS "graduate" was requested, in writing, to complete the SICDS Institute Survey and return it by mail in a self-addressed envelope provided. As stated earlier, the survey consisted of five preliminary questions and 25 survey items. The "graduates" were asked to respond to the survey items by completing a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). In the instructions, the SICDS "graduates" were asked to indicate the extent to which strategies identified in the plans of action completed by each class and the strategies studied in the SICDS Institute have been implemented by them in their respective school or school district.

Data Analysis and Results

Preliminary analysis of the data for this study focused on the 25 survey items. Individual item responses, average item responses, and standard deviations were ascertained for each of the survey items (see Table 1). With the exception of Items 1, 2, and 3, there was a high level of congruence among the respondents toward the positive side of the Likert-type scale. Clearly, the indication here was that the respondents have either implemented strategies, have attitudes, or, at least, engage in behaviors that are appropriate for positive learning opportunities to occur in the school environment for culturally diverse students.

Implications

The present survey was conducted to determine the extent to which those educators completing the SICDS Institute in 1989, 1990, and 1991 at Mississippi State University have implemented strategies designed to enhance the learning opportunities of culturally diverse students in their respective school or school district. Preliminary results indicate that those responding to the survey have implemented these strategies to a great extent.

While it is difficult to conclude that the results reported by the respondents were primarily a function of their involvement in the SICDS Institute at Mississippi State University, it is a strong belief of the SICDS directors that the institute contributed to the survey results due, in part, to its intensity. The SICDS directors are also influenced by the very positive evaluations of the institute reported by the participants. Indeed, many of the participants have described the institute as a most significant aspect of their professional and personal development.

The preliminary results reported in this survey are quite encouraging. It would appear, however, that additional assessments are needed to determine a comprehensive evaluation of the SICDS Institute.

REFERENCES

Benjamin, S. (1985). Cultural diversity: What are the implications for teachers? Clearing House, 59, 80-82.

Boyer, E. (1983). High school: A report on secondary education in America. New York: Harper & Row.

Eisenhart, M. (1989). Reconsidering cultural differences in American schools. Educational Foundations, 3(2), 51-68.

Friedman, N. (1985). The future of ethnic cultural pluralism in America. Urban Education, 20, 177-187.

Goodlad, J. (1984). A place called school: Prospects for the future. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Jenkins, R., & Person, W. (1989). Recollections of black educators during the civil rights movement in Mississippi: An oral history (Final Report). Mississippi State University: Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Mississippi State, MS.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Person, W., Amos, N., & Jenkins, R. (1990, November). Strategies for instructing culturally diverse students. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Person, W., & Handley, H. (1989, November). Effectiveness of core program on teaching performance of selected student teachers. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Little Rock, AR.

Sizer, T. (1984). Horace's compromise: The dilemma of the American high school. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Wagner, H. (1979). Working with the culturally different student. Education, 101, 353-358.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 1

Average Response and Standard Deviations of SICDS Institute Survey Items.

	Survey Items	A.R.	S.D.
1.	Students at my school receive fair and equal treatment.	4.000	1.085
2.	My school has clear guidelines which allow for consistent grading practices.	3.941	0.802
3.	My school has clear guidelines which allow for consistency in the discipline of students.	3.765	1.059
4.	I make an effort to get to know my students personally.	4.529	0.776
5.	I have encouraged staff development programs which focus on the proper treatment of students.	4.353	0.681
6.	I avoid prejudging students.	4.353	0.588
7.	I avoid making false assumptions about students.	4.294	0.666
8.	I avoid sterotyping of students.	4.294	0.666
9.	I make every effort to involve the parents of students in their child's educational experience.	4.471	0.696
10.	I send positive information home to parents about their children's progress.	4.235	0.730
11.	Parents are included on various committees and school programs in my schools.	4.235	0.644
12.	I make efforts to understand and appreciate the differences among students.	4.588	0.600
13.	I make efforts to underatand and appreciate differences among my colleagues.	4.471	0.606
14.	I encourage total community involvement in my school's program.	4.412	0.691
15.	I accept students as individuals.	4.588	0.691
16.	I accept my colleagues as individuals.	4.765	0.424
17.	I treat each student as I expect to be treated.	4.824	0.381
18.	I respect the ideas of others.	4.529	0.499

Table 1
cont'

	Survey Items	A.R.	S.D.
19.	I encourage the development of positive self-esteem among students.	4.882	0.322
20.	I am aware of the cultural differences among the students with whom I work.	4.647	0.478
21.	Active student participation is encouraged in my school.	4.647	0.588
22.	I maintain confidentiality in student conferences.	4.706	0.570
23.	Parental contact is encouraged on a regular basis in my school.	4.647	0.588
24.	I have high expectations for students.	4.824	0.381
25.	I use multicultural education principles in my instructional activities.	4.438	0.704